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FOREWORD

This collection was shown at the Tate Gallery in May of this year, where it formed part of a larger exhibition, organised jointly by the Arts Council and the Tate Gallery, to commemorate Frances Hodgkins and two other distinguished women artists—Ethel Walker and Gwen John.

The Council is greatly indebted to all the owners who have lent their pictures so generously, and in particular to Mr Eardley Knollys and the Executors of the late Miss D. Selby. Acknowledgement is also due to Mrs Myfanwy Piper for her admirable introduction to the catalogue.

PHILIP JAMES

FRANCES HODGKINS

(1869—1947)

MYFANWY PIPER

FRANCES HODGKINS was born in New Zealand in 1869 and died in England in 1947. She first came to London in 1900, with the high hopes of an intelligent colonial coming home. She belonged to the first generation of her family to be born in New Zealand, and her father, a successful solicitor, had many European contacts; as an amateur painter he still sent to London for his artists' materials. But English academic artists into whose circles she was introduced were a bitter disappointment to her, and although during her long painting life she learned such independence that it was almost impossible for her to be disappointed by people, she also found the English climate and countryside unwelcoming, and fled from it as often as possible, until, at the end, forced by the war to spend longer here than ever before, she was at last conquered by the quality of English light and inspired by its sombre delicacy to create some of the richest of her works.

But between those final expressions of the love and experience of nearly eighty years and the first water-colours done under the tuition of her father in Dunedin, Auckland, she made, as she used to say, more than one reputation and discarded it as unworthy of her true capacities. There is no picture in this exhibition earlier than 1915, and few people who knew anything of her work during its great flowering from 1929 onwards, when she was sixty, knew much of what she had done during the first war and the early 'twenties, and they knew still less of her work before that. But, although our knowledge of her early work is vague, and the known facts scanty, and although much of the early work that survives is not comparable in strength, or beauty, or originality with the latest, still there is enough to see how she could have developed as she did. There can be no truly rootless and seedless art, and those who insist too greatly upon the suddenness of her arrival at sixty will have discarded so much as to make her achievement meaningless.

When she left New Zealand aged thirty-one, she had earned

enough money to get to Europe partly by giving piano lessons (she had been intended for a musical career) and partly by selling water-colours and doing black-and-white illustrations for the newspapers. She had avowedly worked to make money quickly and these illustrations gave little indication of what she was to do later. She left England almost at once and spent her first European summer with a water-colour class in Brittany. But France, too, found her unsettled and uneasy. The freedom that she sought in Europe was difficult to accept because she was still not sure of her own direction. She went to Morocco and, from Tangier, with a native caravan to Tetuan where few white women had ever been. The water-colours that she showed immediately on her return at the Fine Art Society (her first English show) must have been fairly ordinary, influenced by Arthur Melville whom she admired and much taken up with the actual portrayal of dazzle and glare, to judge from her work of the next ten years, which was largely concerned with light: lamplight, sunlight, reflected light, moonlight. Years later that experience enabled her to turn from Monet, Sisley and Renoir to painters such as Gauguin and Matisse and to interpret their worlds with first-hand vision and originality. She herself regarded the Moroccan visit as the true beginning of her painting career.

The next ten years she spent in Paris, making visits from there to Holland, Italy and England. In Holland she admired Maris and Mauve. In England she successfully exhibited at the Royal Academy. At Concarneau she found a school of Anglo-American water-colourists led by Gauguin's friend and biographer Charles Morice. In Paris she was a success too, and took a water-colour class of her own at Colarossi's as the first and only woman on the staff.

She was certainly already aware of post-impressionist work—of Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Braque, of the Fauves and of the proceedings of Marinetti and the Futurists. But her work was unaffected by them. And it seems possible that this was not only because she was not ripe for such influences but that it was part of a deliberate intention to be successful in the kind of way that the most daring of her compatriots could understand and appreciate, and the least daring could still accept as success. She was a girl of spirit and pride, and

she knew that she had immense capabilities, though at home she had nothing adequate to measure them by; but she had a more beautiful, more apparently talented and more immediately successful sister, who had given up a painting career for marriage. This it was that helped her determination to make enough money to leave New Zealand for Europe in the first place. The pride, even arrogance, generated by such determined rivalry is long-lived in a sensitive artist and, amidst the confused intellectual elements of a new environment, one thing remained pointed and clear, that she should make good. She had a spirit apt for dedication, but also obstinate, and it was her obstinacy that enabled her to return to New Zealand and Australia in 1912 as 'the girl from down under who conquered Paris'. It was her ripening sense of quality, her personal integrity, that made her reject the easy success offered by the extraordinary welcome she received and return to Europe to make a new reputation unhampered by the idea that she must show what she was made of.

From that time onward she was to be the only judge of her own value and her own achievement.

Soon after her return to Europe the 1914 war was declared, and she came to England, which she then made her base until her death. While in Paris she had learned how hard it is for an artist, and especially for a woman artist, to remain true to her intentions without being distracted by social success or well-meaning friends. 1914 to 1929 was to be the hardest time of her life. When she first settled in England she began to do portraits, but what was of more interest than the portraits was that she began to develop a free, singing palette and an expressive form of composition that depended on her own imagination for its reality and not upon a clever summing-up of natural appearances. The difference can be seen in the *Two Women with a Basket of Flowers*, 1915, and the *Double Portrait* of 1922. The first belongs much more in kind to her work of the first decade of the twentieth century, the second to the beginning of her development after the war, when it became possible to see French pictures again, and when, under the influence of such young English artists as Cedric Morris and Lett Haines, she assessed and renewed the impressions that she had got before but had not begun to exploit. In the twenties she was chiefly concerned never to commit herself in such a way

that she could not change when she chose. She travelled in England and in France and in the summers held water-colour classes largely attended by women, of whom she had a devoted following. Everyone who met her in those circumstances was inspired by her intensity and her wit, and a little disturbed by the capacity of her nature to cut herself off from sympathy or easy success. From 1923 to 1926 she lived and worked in Manchester, but she was constantly disappointed by the reception given to her work, most bitterly when it was rejected by the organisers of a mixed modern show at the City Art Gallery. She had almost made up her mind to return to New Zealand in 1925 when she was given some work designing for the Calico Printers Association. Though her collaboration was not successful it served to keep her in Europe, and from then on she never thought of returning again. It is possible to see the kind of intellectual struggle she had by looking at the pictures of these years. In them there is latent what was to develop more fully in the thirties: nods at Cézanne, Derain, Matisse, Van Gogh, which were afterwards to be digested into a form that was exclusively hers.

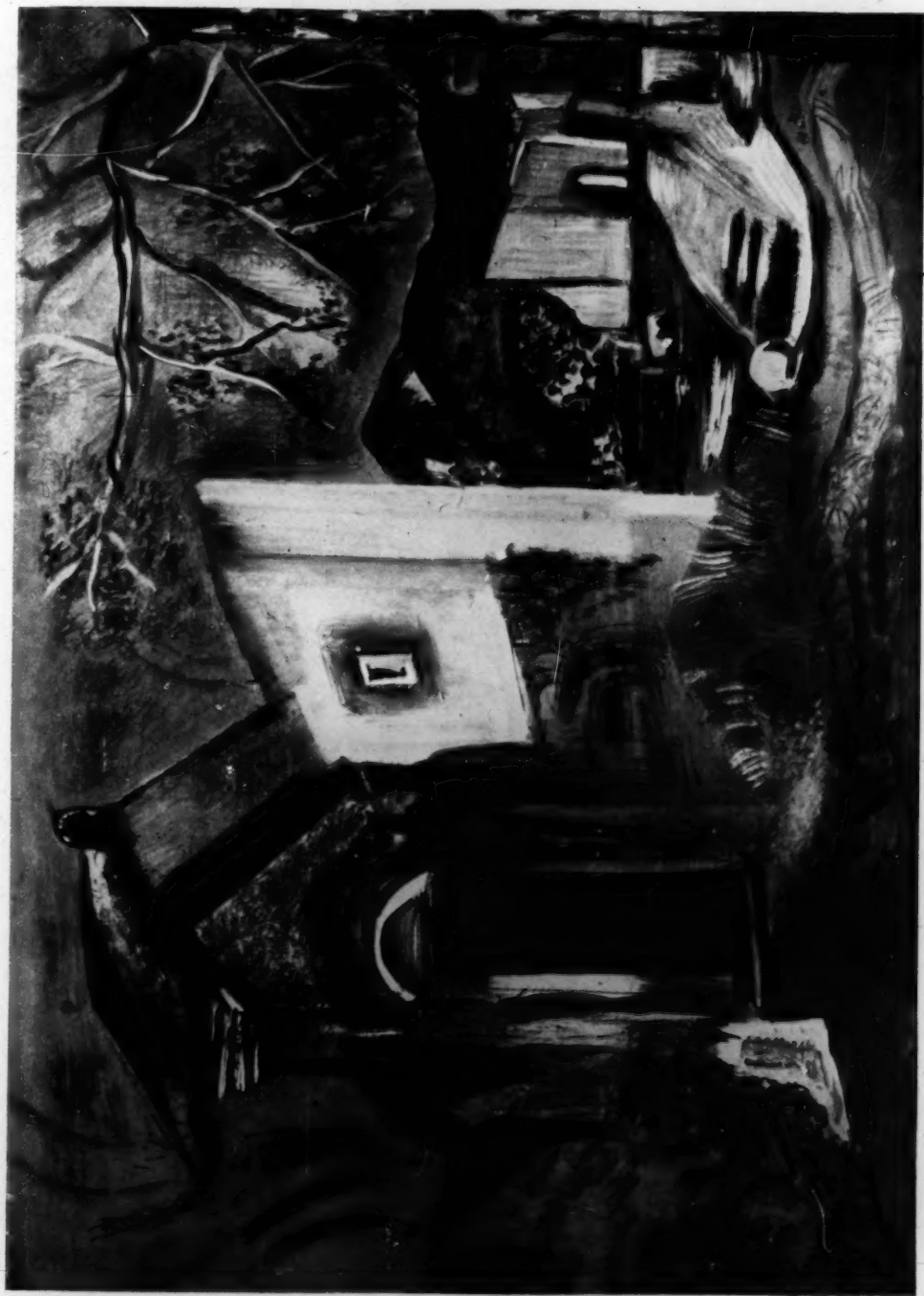
After 1928 she began to show again in London, and to associate with very much younger people, in the London Group and in particular in the Seven and Five Society. Very little was known about her, and her work, seen with the work of younger painters, and having the youthful, brilliant quality it had, made people naturally assume that she was young, too. And so a legend grew that for many years was quite hard to elucidate.

In 1929 some of her work was seen by Arthur Howell of the St George's Gallery, and he it was who first had such faith in her that he supplied her with enough money to paint and took and sold what pictures she sent him to reimburse himself. It was a friendly arrangement of great use to her at that time. He has written the history of the years from 1929 to 1932, when he gave up the gallery and she had her first contract proper, with the Lefevre Gallery, which shows by quotations from her letters just how elusive and how sensitive an artist she was.

By 1932 she was so inured to hardship and so truly dedicated to her art that she was, though properly conscious of it, almost cynical about her 'arrival'. She could never change her way of life, nor had she need to; and the history of the last years lies entirely

in the pictures. From comparatively fashionable post-impressionist still lifes to strange, intense, Mediterranean landscapes, through collections of objects personal to her, Spanish pottery figures, Christmas tree ornaments, arum lilies, to houses and bridges in Wales or Suffolk, she came at last to the agglomeration of things in English farmyards and on English beaches, and the dishevelled landscape of the Purbeck fields: subjects which had no obvious pictorial qualities but which owed their beauty to her experience, her patience and her love.





BRIDGE GATEWAY (No. 33)

Mrs Aime Carlisle



PUMPKINS (No. 32)

Sir Kenneth Clark



LEAVES AND A POT (No. 38)

Mrs P. Broke Freeman

CATALOGUE

Paintings

1. *Two Women with Basket of Flowers*, 1915
Oil, $26\frac{1}{2} \times 26\frac{1}{2}$
LENT BY THE TATE GALLERY
2. *Friends, Double Portrait*, 1922
Oil, $24\frac{1}{4} \times 30\frac{1}{8}$
LENT BY MISS JANE SAUNDERS
3. *Lancashire Family*, c. 1925
Oil, $28 \times 28\frac{1}{4}$
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.
4. *Spanish Landscape*, c. 1930
Oil, 25×30
LENT BY MRS E. M. MACDONALD
5. *Flatford Mill*, 1930
Oil, $28\frac{1}{2} \times 30$
LENT BY THE TATE GALLERY
6. *A Country Window*, c. 1931
Oil, $29 \times 23\frac{1}{2}$
LENT BY JOHN ALDRIDGE, ESQ.
7. *Spanish Shrine*, 1933
Oil, $26 \times 27\frac{1}{4}$
LENT BY GEORGE MITCHELL, ESQ.
8. *Ibiza Harbour*, 1934
Oil, 23×28
LENT BY THE ST GEORGE'S GALLERY
9. *Sabrina's Garden*, 1935
Oil, $25\frac{3}{8} \times 36\frac{1}{4}$
LENT BY BRISTOL CITY ART GALLERY

10. *Self-Portrait (Still Life)*, 1941
Oil, 30 x 25
Signed
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.
11. *Middle Mill, Solva*, 1942
Oil, 30 x 24
LENT BY DR R. V. HARRIS
12. *The Weir*, 1943
Oil, 23½ x 28
Signed
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.
13. *Purbeck Courtyard*, 1944
Oil, 28 x 24
LENT BY SOUTHAMPTON ART GALLERY
14. *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*
Oil, 32 x 45½
LENT BY THE LEFÈVRE GALLERY
15. *The Courtyard in Wartime*, 1944
Oil, 23 x 29½
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.

Water-colours, Drawings and Gouaches

16. *Nuptial Bouquet*, 1925: Plate I
Water-colour, 21½ x 15½
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.
17. *Children on a Bathing Beach*, c. 1925
Water-colour, 15 x 15
LENT BY DONALD HUGHES, ESQ.
18. *Seated Woman*, c. 1925-30
Black chalk, 36½ x 23½
LENT BY THE TATE GALLERY

19. *Boys' Heads, Tréboul, c. 1928*
Water-colour, 15½ x 18
LENT BY THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE MISS D. SELBY
20. *Two Sisters, c. 1929*
Pencil, 13¾ x 21
LENT BY THE LEFÈVRE GALLERY
21. *The Red Parasol, c. 1930*
Water-colour, 17½ x 23½
LENT BY MRS L. C. WERTHEIM
22. *Two Plates, c. 1930*
Water-colour, 16 x 27
LENT BY SIR KENNETH CLARK, K.C.B.
23. *Brown Vase, 1930*
Water-colour, 14 x 18½
LENT BY MRS L. C. WERTHEIM
24. *Eggs and Ferns, c. 1930-31*
Water-colour, 21 x 18
LENT BY THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE MISS D. SELBY
25. *The Garden Gate, 1930-31*
Water-colour, 25 x 19
LENT BY MRS R. A. GORER
26. *Sea Landscape with Flowers, c. 1931*
Pencil, 18½ x 14
LENT BY MRS R. A. GORER
27. *St Tropez*
Black chalk, 11 x 12½
LENT BY THE LEFÈVRE GALLERY
28. *Enchanted Garden, c. 1933*
Gouache, 21½ x 17½
LENT BY THE GRAVES ART GALLERY, SHEFFIELD
29. *Woodland Scene: Landscape in Cornwall*
Water-colour, 26 x 20
LENT BY MRS MICHAEL ROBERTS

30. *Flowers and Still Life*
Water-colour, 25 x 19
LENT BY MRS ELISABETH CURTIS
31. *Solva*, c. 1935
Gouache, 21½ x 29½
LENT BY BIRMINGHAM ART GALLERY
32. *Pumpkins*, 1935: *Plate III*
Gouache, 28 x 20
LENT BY SIR KENNETH CLARK, K.C.B.
33. *Bridge Gateway*, c. 1936: *Plate II*
Gouache, 20½ x 28
LENT BY MRS ANNE CARLISLE
34. *Silver Howe*, 1936
Gouache, 20¾ x 28½
LENT BY MRS R. A. GORER
35. *Arrangement of Jugs*, 1936
Water-colour, 18 x 24
LENT BY JOHN PIPER, ESQ.
36. *Ibiza*, 1937
Gouache, 16¾ x 21½
LENT BY MR AND MRS LEONARD ELMHIRST
37. *The Cow*, c. 1938
Gouache, 21 x 28
LENT BY MISS AMY E. KRAUSS
38. *Leaves and a Pot: Plate IV*
Pencil, 18 x 23
LENT BY MRS P. BROKE FREEMAN
39. *Tréboul*, 1928
Water-colour, 16½ x 21½
LENT BY THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE MISS D. SELBY
40. *August Month*, c. 1937
Water-colour, 19 x 25
LENT BY MISS GWEN BARNARD

41. *Root Crop*, 1942
Gouache, $14\frac{1}{2} \times 21\frac{3}{8}$
LENT BY THE EXECUTOR3 OF THE LATE MISS D. SELBY
42. *China Shoe*, 1942
Gouache, $20\frac{1}{2} \times 16$
Insc.: *Eardly* (sic.) *Knollys from Frances Hodgkins*, 1942
LENT BY EARDLEY KNOLLYS, ESQ.
43. *Corfe Castle*, 1942
Gouache, 18×23
LENT BY THE FERENS ART GALLERY, HULL
44. *Dulaincothy Arms*, 1942
Gouache, 15×21
LENT BY O. RAYMOND DREY, ESQ.
45. *Welsh Emblem*, 1942
Gouache, 15×22
LENT BY O. RAYMOND DREY, ESQ.

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